Ethics, Confidentiality, and Boundaries in Peer Recovery

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Peer Recovery Support Series, Part 8: Ethics, Confidentiality, and Boundaries in Peer Recovery

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Accessing the CE Quiz

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Ethics, Confidentiality & Boundaries in Peer Recovery
How do you define Ethics?

Learning Objectives

This webinar will enable you to:

- Define & identify the 4 levels of ethics
- Professional Boundaries
- Ethics in the Recovery Industry
- Examples of Ethical Dilemmas in Peer Recovery
- Confidentiality and HIPAA regulations
Show of hands!

Raise your hand if you have ever experienced one of these situations:

- You are at the grocery store with your wife and kids, when your client walks up to you, asking whether he can buy non-alcoholic wine
- Your client tells you that he would prefer a male counselor because he has “issues with women”
- You are asked to apply for a position dependent on your certification, but it is expired

Definition of Ethics

Ethics are:
the moral principles, values, and standards of conduct that guide human behavior.

Ethics aim to promote:
values such as fairness, justice, honesty, integrity, respect, and compassion in human interactions
Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one else is watching— even when doing the wrong thing is legal. 

Aldo Leopold

Levels of Ethics

Can you name the four levels of ethics?
Levels of Ethics

The four levels of Ethics:

- Personal
- Professional
- Organizational
- Legal

Ethics Thinking Questions

What differentiates them from one another?

Which of them apply to your work in the recovery industry?
Personal Ethics

A set of moral principles and values that guide behavior and decision-making.

The internalized beliefs and standards that we use to determine right & wrong, fair or unfair, just or unjust in our personal lives.

Serve as the framework to assess the consequences of our actions and make choices that align with our values.

Importance of Personal Ethics

Trust
Importance of Personal Ethics

Integrity

Accountability

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Importance of Personal Ethics

Professionalism

Examples of Personal Ethics

★ Respecting privacy & confidentiality
★ Having honesty & integrity in all things
★ Being compassionate & empathetic
★ Having a non-judgemental attitude
★ Respecting cultural diversity
★ Displaying respect for colleagues & team
★ Maintaining a commitment to growth
★ Remaining open to constructive feedback
★ Possessing self-awareness & self-reflection
★ Promoting safe & inclusive space
★ Being accountable to your words & actions
★ Avoiding conflict of interest
★ Recognizing others needs & perspectives
★ Knowing your limitations
★ Seeking support and asking for help

Share other examples of personal ethics in the chat box
Professional Ethics

The *moral principles and values* that govern behavior and conduct in a particular profession.

Expectations to be adhered to while carrying out work while interacting with clients, colleagues and the public.

Common themes in professional ethics often include integrity, competence, confidentiality, objectivity, fairness, accountability and professionalism.

Importance of Professional Ethics

Building trust
Importance of Professional Ethics

Ensuring confidentiality

Importance of Professional Ethics

Maintaining boundaries
Importance of Professional Ethics

Respecting autonomy

Professional Ethics Requirements

Safety First
Standards above All

Other Requirements:

1. Paperwork: Legal vs. personal notes, professional forms (contracts, forms, CYA)
2. Informed consent (Release of information forms)
3. Locks, encryption
4. Collaborating with referring professionals and current providers
5. Professional relationships with community members and family
6. Mandated reporting
7. Health issues of withdrawal and when to refer or call emergency services
8. Intellectual property infringement
Peer Recovery Specialist are expected to behave in a professional and respectful manner at all times. This includes:

- maintaining appropriate boundaries
- avoiding conflicts of interest
- refraining from any behavior that may compromise the client's recovery journey

Organizational Ethics

The moral principles and values that guide behaviors and decision-making in organizations.

The collective ethical standards and practices that govern how it conducts business, interacts with stakeholders and fulfills responsibilities to society.

Plays a vital role in shaping the culture and character, reputation and trust of the organization.

Sets expectations for employees' behavior and conduct.
Organizational Ethics

1. The ethics required by the professional organization to which you belong.
2. Being aware of under what circumstances your license, credential, or certification can be lost or removed.
3. This includes infringement of any of the professional ethical requirements in the previous section.
4. The organization ethics board will determine level of consequences.

Examples:
- Reputation
- Employee engagement
- Compliance
- Stakeholder trust
- Risk management
- Values alignment
- Competitive advantage
- Sustainability
- Talent attraction
- Public support

Legal Ethics

The primary objective of legal ethics are to ensure the integrity of the profession, maintain public trust and confidence and protect the interests and rights of clients.

The rules of professional responsibility.

Legal ethics are rules and regulations, as opposed to guidelines or principles, and are legally binding.
Legal Considerations

- Confidentiality
- Data management and exchange
- Professional credentials, certification, and licensing
- Intellectual property
- Behaviors and boundaries
- Acts of dishonesty, theft, engaging in dual relationships, and professional infringements that pose risks or cause harm to clients or their families

Jurisdiction-Specific Legal Ethics

KNOW THE LAW WHERE YOU ARE WORKING

The authority granted by law to the courts to rule on legal matters and render judgments, according to the subject matter of the case, and the geographical region in which the issue took place.

Areas of jurisdiction apply to local, state, and federal laws
Professional Boundaries

1. **Confidentiality**: respect the confidentiality of clients and personal information

1. **Competence**: provide services within your area of expertise

1. **Non-discrimination**: treat all individuals with respect and fairness

1. **Informed Consent**: ensure clients understand your role and the nature of services, potential risks, benefits and goals.

1. **Client Autonomy**: recognize and respect individual’s right to make decisions.
**Professional Boundaries**

1. **Conflict of Interest**: avoiding situations where personal or financial interests may compromise the objectivity of your judgement and decision-making

1. **Professional Integrity**: acting honestly, transparently and ethically

1. **Client welfare**: prioritizing the well-being, safety, and best interests

1. **Collaboration & Consultation**: engaging in collaborative relationships with others, seeking consultation when needed and working as part of a multidisciplinary team to provide care

1. **Professional Responsibility**: taking responsibility for one's actions, acknowledging mistakes, and addressing them with integrity and promptly, while also reporting any unethical behaviors within the profession

**Common Violations of Professional Boundaries**

- Breach of confidentiality
- Financial exploitation
- Providing services beyond professional scope of practice
- Accepting kickbacks for referrals
- Bartering services with clients for trade
- Ignoring relapse to keep the client
- Dual relationships
- Accepting gifts and in-kind services while working with a client
- Failing to report observed ethical violations
- Advising clients on physician prescribed medications
- Psychiatric diagnosis
- Taking a client to your own home group/sponsor
- Inviting client into any aspect of your personal life
Boundaries in Peer Recovery

1. How do these boundaries differ from personal boundaries?
2. Have you encountered situations where clients or family members have placed you in compromising positions?
3. Is it required to have a gender-specific role when living with or traveling with a client as a Recovery Specialist?

99.9% of Recovery Specialists will face ethical challenges.
Ethical Challenges in Peer Recovery

Challenges encountered by a Recovery Specialist may include:

- Navigating complex ethical dilemmas
- Engaging in meaningful and moral reasoning
- Proactively identifying potential ethical issues at an early stage
- Resolving dilemmas in the most ethical manner for all parties

CAVEAT

Whether or not a behavior is legal or illegal does not determine if it is ethical or unethical
Taking a Team Approach

Working within an organization, company, or team of clinical professionals is essential for a Recovery Specialist to have access to the necessary resources.

- Uphold professional boundaries by knowing your role
- Collaborate openly with others
- Uphold confidentiality
- Let go of pride - “I can do this” is not necessary
- Seek supervision and consultation, ask questions
- Continuously evaluate and adjust as the team grows

Ethical Dilemmas in Peer Recovery

Ethical Dilemma = a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two courses of action, either of which entails transgressing a moral principle.

Confidentiality:

You discover sensitive personal information about your client during the course of your work. However, a close friend or family member asks you to disclose that information to them.

How do you navigate the conflict between maintaining client confidentiality and meeting the needs of their loved ones?
Ethical Dilemmas in Peer Recovery

Dual Relationships:
You develop a close friendship or romantic relationship with a client outside of your professional role.

How do you manage the boundaries of this relationship to ensure that it doesn't compromise your objectivity, professional judgement, or the well-being of the client?

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Ethical Dilemmas in Peer Recovery

Informed Consent:
You believe that a particular treatment or intervention would greatly benefit your client, but they express strong reservations or refuse to give informed consent.

How do you balance your professional judgment with the client's autonomy and right to make decisions about their own recovery process?

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Other Infringements of Professional Ethics

➢ Engaging in conflicts of interest where personal, financial, or professional relationships compromise objectivity or impartiality in decision-making.

➢ Discriminating against individuals based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics.

➢ Misrepresenting qualifications, credentials, or experience to clients, colleagues, or the public.

➢ Engaging in fraudulent activities, such as falsifying documents, billing for services not rendered, or intentionally misusing funds.

Other Infringements of Professional Ethics

➢ Abusing power or authority by exploiting clients, colleagues, or subordinates for personal gain or to maintain control.

➢ Failing to maintain professional competence by not pursuing ongoing education or staying updated with industry standards and best practices.

➢ Violating privacy and data protection regulations by mishandling or improperly disclosing sensitive information.

➢ Engaging in plagiarism or intellectual property theft by using someone else's work without proper attribution or permission.
How to Address Ethical Dilemmas

Remember that resolving ethical dilemmas requires careful consideration of the specific circumstances and principles involved.

These strategies can serve as a starting point, but it's crucial to refer to the ethical guidelines and professional standards specific to your field for more detailed guidance.

Addressing Ethical Dilemmas

➔ Review the relevant ethical codes, guidelines, or policies established by professional organizations or regulatory bodies to identify principles and standards that can help inform your decision-making
Addressing Ethical Dilemmas

➔ Seek advice from trusted colleagues, supervisors, or professional organizations to gain different perspectives and guidance on how to navigate the ethical dilemma.

Addressing Ethical Dilemmas

➔ If the ethical dilemma involves conflicts, consider involving a neutral third party or mediator to help facilitate communication and find a resolution that respects the rights and well-being of all involved.
Addressing Ethical Dilemmas

Engage in ongoing professional development, training, and education to enhance your knowledge and skills in ethical decision-making. Stay informed about current ethical issues and trends in your field.

Recovery Industry Code of Ethics

Standard #1
Integrity

Standard #2
Non-Discrimination

Standard #3
Positive and supportive Interpersonal and Inter-professional Relationships

Standard #4
Confidentiality

Standard #5
Self evaluation

Standard #6
Community Social Model Advocate

Standard #7
Cooperation with complaint investigations
### Information on Ethics in Peer Recovery

- International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC)
- National Association of Drug and Alcohol and Associated Conditions (NAADAC)
- American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- American Psychiatric Association (AAMFT)
- International Family Therapy Association (IFTA)
- International Coaching Federation (ICF)
- International Federation of Therapeutic Communities (IFTC)
- Association of Intervention Specialists (AIS)
- Network of Independent Interventionists (NII)

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### Confidentiality in Peer Recovery

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Confidentiality in Peer Recovery

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a federal law that:

- required the creation of national standards to protect sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge
- protects the privacy of individually identifiable health information
- establishes national standards for the security of electronic protected health information
- requires covered entities and business associates to provide notification following a breach of unsecured protected health information

Learn more about HIPAA and privacy at: http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/

Common Breaches of Confidentiality

How many of these common violations have you experienced?

Social media: uploading photos with/of the client and/or sharing location of job

Sharing with your own sponsor about your client's mental illness or substance use disorder

Reporting client notes to your case manager via a non-HIPAA compliant texting service

Informing client's mom about her without signed ROI
Intellectual Property

- Adequate, correct citation of materials
- Avoid plagiarism
- Acceptable use of intellectual property
- Respecting trademarks, registrations and copyright

Accessing the CE Quiz

Thank you for attending this webinar! In order to get your CE certificate, you will need to pass the content knowledge quiz with a score of 80% or higher and complete the survey evaluation. Click here to access the CE quiz.
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UPCOMING WEBINARS

October 25th, 2023
Rewiring Your Life
By: Erica Spiegelman, CADAC II

October 26th, 2023
Peer Recovery Support Series, Part 9: Supporting Recovery - Who's Who at the Zoo?
By: Randy Anderson, RCP-F, LADC

November 1st, 2023
Skills for Problem Gambling Integration
By: Tana Russell, SUDP, NCTTP, WSCGC II, CGT

November 15th, 2023
Sustainable Integrated Care Through Community Partnerships
By: Rhonda Fairchild, BS, PRSSs and Samson Teklemariam, LPC, CPTM
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www.naadac.org/annualconference

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Thank You
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